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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

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With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[1] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapön*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[1] *Youmi* and *gyapön* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

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of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

An example of the working of the joint family can be given from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

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be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple and one child, the dependent members of the household usually have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

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shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him afrer he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
● [428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs.

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain.

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose.

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child
● [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does
831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no
[521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should
[212 535] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen
584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

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587 *Oong-op* who is prepared to accept her, then the new husband
428 inherits her. Such cases do not often happen, and only then, I think, because, while customary law is quite clear on the point of widow inheritance, there is no means by which it can be enforced. The system of widow inheritance is considered very objectionable by "civilised" Lepchas, and in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts has been completely dropped, even among the non-Christian community; but there is no doubt that it is a satisfactory method of providing for widows in a community which does not permit women to inherit property; and it is certainly less hypocritical than the Hindu system, for instance, in which a widow remains on in the house but does not actually marry any of her deceased husband's brothers. The Lepcha system does at least recognise and regularise the needs of the body; for no one but an ascetic would expect a young (and perhaps attractive) widow to remain chaste for the rest of her life, whatever tribal law had to say on the subject.

It sometimes happens that a widow has no *Oong-op*. Should she be of an age which makes it unlikely that she will procure another husband in the ordinary way, she may go and live with an elder sister, always provided that the latter's husband is willing to receive her. This arrangement, once again, does not call for any very great readjustment; for, as we have already seen, this man too has always had the legal right to copulate with her. But there are always a certain number of middle-aged widowers who find it difficult to persuade a young girl to marry them, human nature being what it is, and so it happens that a widow in these circumstances often marries some older man who has lost his wife and wishes to marry again. The whole system seems admirably constituted so as to provide for everybody. A few actual examples will perhaps help to make the working of it clear:

587 Chano and his elder brother lived together in one house. Both were married; but Chano's wife died childless some years ago. In the meantime Chano had, of course, the right

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587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open.

[624] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a
●428 woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

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Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to co-operate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

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It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the trance—and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident—it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă grŏng thing* and *Nă zŏng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to